



*We will lead the nation in improving student achievement.*

**DIVISIONS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES and SUPPORTS**

**OCTOBER 2008 DL UPDATE**

**Dyslexia: Frequently Asked Questions**

1. ***What is the official definition of dyslexia?*** "Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge."  
[International Dyslexia Association (IDA).]

2. ***Can a child with a diagnosis of dyslexia be determined eligible to receive special education?*** Yes, the term "dyslexia" is included in the definition of a specific learning disability [34 CFR 300.8.(c)(10).] However, the eligibility team must determine that the dyslexia substantially limits the student's learning and requires specialized instruction that cannot be received in the general education program to determine that the child is a child with a specific learning disability.

3. ***Is it appropriate for the school system to provide interventions for a child with a diagnosis of dyslexia before making an eligibility determination?*** Yes, the school system should provide appropriate reading interventions and document the student's response to determine if adequate progress can be made without the provision of specialized instruction.

4. ***How should the school system respond when a parent provides documentation from a private evaluation that gives a diagnosis of "dyslexia"?*** The school system should review the documentation, meet and conference with the parent(s) to discuss the student's reading progress, and to determine if there is an educational impact.

5. ***How should the school system address the determination of educational impact for a child with a diagnosis of dyslexia?*** The system must document inadequate response to core instruction and subsequent supplemental interventions. An "inadequate response" denotes that the student does not appropriately progress towards benchmarks in order to perform comparable to peers. Please note that this documentation is one part of a comprehensive evaluation.

6. *How should I help parents and educators to understand dyslexia?* Remember, we recognize basic reading, reading comprehension, and reading fluency under the specific learning disability category. A student diagnosed with dyslexia exhibits difficulty in reading, however, the district must determine if there is a significant learning difficulty that impacts the ability to progress through the curriculum.

### **Dispute Resolution Tip**

In August 2008, the Georgia Board of Education approved the Division for Special Education Services proposal to contract with ten qualified individuals to conduct the investigation of special education formal complaints. No change has been made to State Board Rule 160-4-7-.12 Dispute Resolution, which provides the regulations for the filing of complaints and the investigation process. The difference for local systems is that in most instances the complaint investigator will be a qualified, contracted individual, who has participated in complaint investigation training at the GaDOE.

As complaints are assigned for investigation, you and your Superintendent will be notified of the name of the assigned investigator by telephone and through an official letter. The role of the contract complaint investigator will be to gather the facts and develop findings that will be provided to the GaDOE. The Division for Special Education Services dispute resolution staff will review the facts and findings and issue a resolution letter based on this information. Any corrective action that is required by a local system will be determined and monitored by the Georgia Division for Special Education Services. This new structure is being implemented to meet important goals that include the investigations conducted by neutral parties trained specifically in the investigation process and the opportunity to complete the investigations within a shorter timeline. We look forward to working with local systems and parents as we implement this new structure. All parties involved in the investigation will be provided an opportunity to submit feedback to the Divisions for Special Education. If you have additional questions, please contact Debbie Gay at 404-657-7320 or [dgay@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:dgay@doe.k12.ga.us).

### **Due Process Decisions**

During the recent OSEP verification visit, we had a discussion concerning the obligation of the State (SEA) regarding general supervision responsibilities in the dispute resolution processes. As you know, when a formal complaint is filed and there is a finding, the State must ensure that corrective action is taken. We will now be formalizing a system to confer with local systems when a due process decision contains a finding (such as a procedural error) irregardless of the prevailing party. We are required to assure that noted procedural issues are corrected, even when the school system is the prevailing party. Additionally, we will be making contacts to verify that corrective action directed to local systems in the due process decision has been completed.

## **Translated Special Education and Parents' Rights Forms**

The translated Parents Rights may be found on the GaDOE web page with our other forms, but they are also on the TransAct web site. Included on the TransAct web site are all of our special education model forms in multiple languages. If you have not used TransAct, you should check it out and let your teachers know about it. Every school system has access to TransAct, developed originally for all the NCLB forms and information for families who speak other languages. Last year we added the special education forms to the site.

Go to [www.transact.com](http://www.transact.com), and log in. If you have never been there, you will be directed to the new user page. Once logged in, look on the left hand column and select "Special Services". When that page comes up you see PDF versions listed of all our forms. Select one and when you get to that page, you may change the language at the top of the page. Each form may be filled in online and printed or saved for later use. On the Parents Rights form, you may add contact information at the end.

Coming soon, all the special education forms will allow spaces to grow as you type. Right now they have limited spaces, but the latest enhancement will be the ability to grow with the filling in of the form or document. Even when you are filling in an IEP in English, you can use these forms to show parents, in their language, what the section is all about and what you are actually discussing. Although the site will not translate the text you enter, we recommend printing the appropriate forms in the parent's language for them to follow along.

Please check out the TransAct information, and tell us what you think. What further enhancements or documents you would like?

## **Guidance for the Assessment of Special Needs Students Placed in Facilities by Local School Systems**

The following guidance was provided by Dr. Martha Reichrath, Deputy Superintendent for the Office of Standards, Instruction, and Assessment early in September.

The purpose of this summary is to provide guidance regarding participation in state assessments for those students with disabilities who have been placed by their local school system in facilities, either in-state or out-of-state. Because the student's education plan is addressed under a Georgia Individualized Education Program (IEP), the local school system must ensure that such students are receiving instruction under the Georgia curriculum and are participating in all applicable state assessments.

### **Applicable Assessments**

State Board of Education rule 160-3-1-.07 specifies the required assessments for all Georgia students. Decisions regarding participation in the assessment program for students with disabilities must be documented in the student's IEP. The IEP team must determine: 1) which general assessments the student will be administered, 2) what accommodations are needed for each general assessment, or, 3) if the student is accessing the curriculum through alternate achievement standards and cannot participate in the general state assessment, even with maximum appropriate accommodations. If the student is accessing the curriculum at an entry level and the IEP states the student is working towards alternate achievement standards, the student should participate through the alternate assessment.

### Location

When a student has been placed in another facility, either within or outside of Georgia, the sending school system will determine the most appropriate location for assessing the student. The sending system is the school system in which the student is enrolled and where Full Time Equivalent (FTE) credits are received for the student. The sending system should ensure that all policies and procedures for assessment administration are followed and that the appropriate assessment materials are securely transferred to the assessment location, in a timely manner. Facility administrators must return assessment materials to the sending system's test coordinator within three days after completion of the assessment.

### Scheduling

The sending school system must assure that all testing windows for assessments are honored. These windows may be found in the Georgia Student Assessment Program Student Assessment Handbook (SAH) and/or Examiner's Manual for each assessment. These documents may be accessed on the GaDOE assessment website: [http://www.gadoe.org/ci\\_testing.aspx](http://www.gadoe.org/ci_testing.aspx).

### Supervision

State Board of Education Rule 160-3-1-.07 specifies that only certified personnel who have been trained to administer the specific assessment shall administer Georgia assessments. It is the responsibility of the sending school system to document the certification of the test administrator, the provision of training in the assessments to be administered, and that all steps of the assessment administration and security, as specified in the SAH and/or Examiner's Manual have been followed. Examiners administering Georgia assessments in out-of-state facilities are not required to hold a Georgia education certification. However, the examiner must hold an education certification for the state where the facility is located and receive training in the administration of the assessment.

The sending system's Test Coordinator is the point of contact for the facility where the student is administered assessments.

### Accommodations

Testing accommodations, as outlined in the student's current IEP, are to be provided for the student during assessment. The GaDOE will not honor any accommodations that are not authorized as indicated in the current SAH and/or Examiners Manual.

Please direct inquiries regarding this policy to Deborah Houston in the Assessment Administration Division at 404-657-0251 or [dhouston@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:dhouston@doe.k12.ga.us).

## **Deaf and Hard of Hearing: The Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA)**

The EIPA will continue to be offered at several locations through the 2008-2009 school year. Any candidate may register, but professional training and experience are **highly** recommended. If you were recently assessed with this instrument, you may be subject to a wait period. The GaDOE is sponsoring the majority of the cost of the assessment, but individuals will be responsible for \$125 of the registration fees.

**When?** November 8-9, 2008

**Where?** Largo Tibet Elementary School,  
Savannah, Georgia,

**When?** January 31 and February 1, 2009

**Where?** Macon State College, Macon, Georgia

**When?** February 28 and March 1, 2009

**Where?** to be determined

**When?** May 29-30-31, 2009

**Where?** to be determined

**How?** See <http://www.rrfcnetwork.org/mprrc/ask12> Click on "EIPA Registration", and then select the date and location desired to access the registration form. First come, first served.

## **Deaf/Hard of Hearing: The Building Administrator's Interpreter Evaluation Instrument**

The evaluation instrument used by the building administrator typically focuses on issues that are within his or her purview. These issues include observations or assessments of the interpreter's promptness, ability to get along with others, acceptance of responsibility, and so on. The instrument used to assist evaluation in these areas may be the same one that is used with other school personnel.

The procedures for its use may differ, however, especially if the interpreter is itinerant and moves from one building to another. [These are particular "overall job performance tasks" that are appropriate for the administrator's assessment instrument]:

1. Demonstrate the ability to understand and follow instructions
2. Be reliable in meeting responsibilities
3. Be supportive toward the program in which he or she is employed
4. Be constructive in his or her advocacy for quality
5. Have good interpersonal relationships with staff, particularly with the teachers and others providing services to the deaf students
6. Be effective with the deaf students and their hearing peers
7. Be flexible in adapting to change
8. Observe school policies and procedures
9. Use good judgment and decision-making in work-related situations
10. Have an acceptable personal appearance for the work setting

Reference: Seal, B., (1998). *Best practices in educational interpreting*. Needham Heights: Allyn and Bacon (29).

For more information about Educational Interpreters, please contact Dr. Frank Nesbit at 404-657-9976 or [fnesbit@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:fnesbit@doe.k12.ga.us).

## **Compliance: Timelines Summary Report**

### **FY08 Timeline Data**

- For FY08, the percentage of initial eligibilities completed on time was 89.13% which was an increase from 88.28%.
- For FY08, the percentage of preschool transitions (BCW) was 96.78% which was an increase from 82.6%.
- For FY08, the percentage of redeterminations completed on time was 94.90% which was an increase from 90.5%.

### **Technical Assistance Data**

Systems that were below 85% for two consecutive years received technical assistance from the GaDOE during FY08. Technical assistance was provided to 41 systems for one to three timeline issues. Of those systems 14/41 met compliance, 23/41 progress was noted, 4/41 remained noncompliant.

### **Requirements for Noncompliance**

According to IDEA, the state must notify LEAs, in writing, of any areas of noncompliance. Systems below 95% will receive a letter of notification of noncompliance including the specific area of the timeline issue(s).

**All systems with less than 95% timeline data must have improvement activities written into their system CLIP. This is not new and was a requirement last school year. The department will be conducting verification checks for CLIP improvement activities and some systems will be requested to submit their timeline logs to verify their FY08 data.**

### **Things to Remember about Timeline Report:**

1. Students failing vision or hearing screening is not an acceptable/excusable reason for delayed/late timelines. Systems must review policies, practices, and procedures to correct this problem.
2. Systems should not wait to compile the timeline information until the report due date. Monthly tracking is a must to ensure accurate data and to identify areas for correction. It is important to track the data for allowable exceptions for lateness, number of days late after the 60 days, and reasons for lateness according to the categories listed on the report. Refer to the FY 08 summary report for this information.
3. Timeline data are collected for all initial evaluations to determine eligibility for special education and for all eligibility redeterminations. This includes speech/language and all other eligibilities, including those that do not require a psychological evaluation.

**Event Codes Guidance**

The following table has been modified to address concerns expressed in the special education directors' call related to the reporting of initial special education event codes for students who were initially found ineligible and then determined eligible at a later date. The initial determination as not eligible should be reported as Event Code 04 (Initial Eligibility Determination) and the redetermination as eligible should be reported Event Code 08 (Eligibility Redetermination). Timeline determinations will be based on the number of days between Event 02 (Parent Consent to Evaluation) and Event 04 (Initial Eligibility Determination) at which the student was determined as not eligible. Events associated with Event Code 08 (Eligibility Redetermination) are represented by "XX". The original table is included in the documentation for the Special Education Level Record in Student Record posted on the data collections website.

Event Codes	Public School Student-Evaluated Eligible	Public School Student-Evaluated Not Eligible	Public School Student-Evaluated Eligible/Not Served	Public School Student-Evaluated Not Eligible Subsequently Determined Eligible	Private School Student-Evaluated Not Eligible	Private School Student-Evaluated Eligible for Proportionate Share
'01' -Babies Can't Wait Transition	If applicable	If applicable	If applicable	If applicable	If applicable	If applicable
'02' -Parent Consent to Evaluation	X	X	X	X	X	X
'03' -Initial Evaluation	X	X	X	X	X	X
'04' -Initial Eligibility Determination	X	X	X	X (Not Eligible)	X	X
'05' -Initial IEP Meeting	X		X	XX		X (To determine FAPE)
'06' -Initial IEP Placement / Transition Service Begin (BCW)	X			XX		
"08" - Eligibility Redetermination				XX Eligible		

## **Traumatic Injury Update**

*brought to you by the Children & Youth Subcommittee of the Brain & Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission*

Did you know that traumatic brain injury (TBI) is the leading cause of death and disability among children, but that it's difficult to identify and diagnose in children? Did you know that children with spinal cord injury often face many obstacles to learning?

The Brain & Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission is Georgia's Lead Agency on Traumatic Brain & Spinal Injuries. This means that it is designated with the task of educating state agencies and elected officials about the needs of Georgians with traumatic injuries, as well as recommending legislation, policies and programs to improve the state system of care for them.

Because the Commission is particularly concerned about children and youth with brain and spinal injuries it created the Children & Youth Subcommittee to focus on their needs. The Subcommittee, which has been meeting since 2006, is made up of experts including teachers; school psychologists; a representative from the GaDOE's Divisions for Special Education; parents of children with traumatic injuries; doctors, therapists, and a researcher from Children's Healthcare of Atlanta and Shepherd Center; a nurse case manager; and representatives of agencies and organizations that serve children, including Parent to Parent of Georgia, the Georgia Advocacy Office, Children's Medical Services, and Community Advanced Practice Nurses.

Recently, the Subcommittee assisted in developing a 10-year State Action Plan that is designed to help address the needs of Georgians with traumatic brain and spinal injuries. One of their goals in the Plan is to help educate school personnel about the particular needs of children with these injuries.

That's why we're excited to bring you this update! Throughout the year we'll bring you more information about children with traumatic injuries, including data, tips, and resources.

This month's resource is the Brain & Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission. You can learn more about our state's Lead Agency on Traumatic Brain & Spinal Injuries at [www.bsitf.state.ga.us](http://www.bsitf.state.ga.us).

## Divisions for Special Education Services and Supports Professional Development Series

To support local systems in providing training to teachers and administrators on various topics regarding special education, the Georgia Department of Education, Divisions for Special Education Services and Supports, is conducting an ongoing series of Elluminate sessions. These sessions are intended to provide current information on the issues that affect students with disabilities and their families. The topics and dates are listed below. **Passwords are no longer required.** This list will be updated monthly. Please go to: <http://illuminate.gavirtualschool.org/doe/index.html> for the updated list of sessions. Various training materials and products will be updated on an on-going basis. The recorded sessions are listed below as well as the upcoming sessions which are highlighted and are scheduled from 3:30-5:00 p.m.

IEP Sessions		Transition Sessions	
October 3, 2007 October 15, 2007 October 29, 2007 <b>December 15, 2008</b>	Developing the IEP Eligibility Transition Developing Standards Based Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for SWDs	September 11, 2007 October 9, 2007  November 13, 2007 February 12, 2008 March 10, 2008  May 13, 2008  August 26, 2008 September 23, 2008  <b>January 27, 2009</b>  <b>February 24, 2009</b>  <b>March 17, 2009</b>  <b>May 12, 2009</b>	Transition is a Verb! Transition Planning for Improving Graduation Outcomes and AYP Optimizing Interagency Council Resources Innovative Assessments Practices Writing Powerful Transition Plans for the 08-09 School Year Post-Secondary Education for Students with Disabilities Transition-The Big Picture Vocational Rehabilitation 101-Helpful Hints for Transition Coordinating Transition to Adult Services- Effective Practices Transition Assessment for Transition Plan Writing Summary of Performance-What's It All About? Assistive Technology for Transition to Post Secondary Education
Compliance			
September 24, 2007  November 26, 2007 December 3, 2007 February 11, 2008  <b>December 8, 2008</b>	Evaluations and Determinations LRE Discipline Making Accommodation Developing Decisions for Instruction and Testing How to Access Technical Assistance for Compliance		
Positive Behavior Supports			
January 7, 2008  January 28, 2008 February 25, 2008	Developing and Implementing FBAs and BIPs Positive Behavior Supports Using Data to Make Positive Changes in Behavior		
Access to Curriculum for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities		Co-teaching in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)	
September 13, 2007  October 11, 2007 November 8, 2007 January 10, 2008 February 7, 2008 March 13, 2008	Aligning and Embedding IEP Skills Into Adapted Grade Level Curricular Activities Utilizing Technology to Access the Curriculum How to Show Progress for Students Across Functioning Levels Timeline Review/Student Use of Adapted GPS Activities and Materials "Points to Remember" and Assembling the Portfolio Last Minute Tips	September 19, 2007 October 29, 2007 December 20, 2007 January 29, 2008	Teaching Students with Disabilities in the LRE Effective Co-Teaching: The Six Approaches Co-Planning for Teachers in the LRE Differentiating Instruction in the LRE LRE-Co-teaching Re-Delivery Manuals
		<a href="http://www.gadoe.org/ci_exceptional.aspx?PageReq=CIEXCManual">http://www.gadoe.org/ci_exceptional.aspx?PageReq=CIEXCManual</a>	
		Data Collection	
		August 19, 2008	Data Collection Workshop

Elluminate Sessions continued...			
September 17, 2008	Top Ten Things Administrators Should Know about the GAA/Access		
<b>Family Engagement</b>			
April 21, 2008	Collaborating with Community Partners		
<b>Related Services</b>		<b>Academic Performance for SWDs</b>	
September 19, 2007	Multi Disability Eligibility Form: An Introduction for SLPs	<b>October 15, 2008</b>	Improving Academic Performance of Students with Disabilities (SWDs) for Elementary Mathematics
October 16, 2007	Pyramid of Intervention for SLPs: Determining Your Role, Part 2	<b>November 5, 2008</b>	Improving Academic Performance of SWDs for Elementary Reading/Language Arts
October 17, 2007	Pyramid of Intervention for SLPs: Determining Your Role Part 1	<b>November 10, 2008</b>	Top 10 FY 08 Most Cited Due Process Issues
October 23, 2007	Pyramid of Intervention for SLPs: Determining Your Role Part 3	<b>November 12, 2008</b>	Improving Academic Performance of SWDs for Secondary Mathematics
		<b>November 17, 2008</b>	Improving Academic Performance of SWDs for Secondary Reading/Language Arts
<b>Assistive Technology</b>		<b>Disability Specific</b>	
March 24, 2008	Assistive Technology: Consideration and Documentation	May 5, 2008	Eligibility and Strategies for Students With Visual Impairments
		May 19, 2008	Preparing for Instructing Students with Traumatic Brain Injury
<b>DSESS Miscellaneous</b>			
April 7, 2008	Q & A with the Divisions for Special Education Services and Supports		

## **Dates to Remember**

### **October**

- 7 Special Education Directors' Discussion Forum
- 15-17 Georgia Vision Educators Statewide Training (GVEST)/GA AER Conference  
Epworth by the Sea, St. Simon, Georgia. For more information go to [www.gimc.org](http://www.gimc.org)  
or contact Kathy Segers at [ksegers@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:ksegers@doe.k12.ga.us) or 478-751-4000.
- 22-26 Touch the Future/Transition and SERID Conference and Expo, Atlanta Hilton

### **November**

- 5 New Special Education Directors' Academy, Savannah Riverfront Hotel
- 4-5 State Advisory Panel, Savannah, location to be announced
- 6-7 G-CASE Fall Conference, Savannah Marriott Riverfront Hotel
- 8-9 Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA), Largo Tibet  
Elementary School, Savannah, Georgia
- 16-18 National Dropout Prevention Center Conference, Ravinia Hotel,  
Atlanta, Georgia

### **December**

- 8 Special Education Directors' Elluminate, Kim Hartsell and Nancy O'Hara,  
Divisions for Special Education Services and Supports

### **January**

- 31 Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA), Macon State College  
Macon, Georgia

### **February**

- 1 Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA), Macon State College  
Macon, Georgia
- 1 New Special Education Directors' Academy, Renaissance Waverly Hotel,  
Atlanta, Georgia
- 1-3 Georgia Association of Educational Leaders (GAEL), Renaissance Waverly Hotel,  
Atlanta, Georgia
- 27-28 Council for Exceptional Children Conference, Athens, Georgia

### **March**

- 3-6 Exceptional Children's Week with the theme "Raising the Bar"